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Prison Awaits Gun-Runners Terpil, Korkala

NEW YORK (AP) — Two fugitive American gun-runners with extensive ties to international terrorists were sentenced in absentia to a maximum of 17 and two-thirds to 53 years in prison yesterday by a judge who said the defendants "trade in death and destruction."

Their clients were said to have included Idi Amin, ousted dictator of Uganda.

"They have no allegiance to any flag; they prosper in a world at war; wherever terrorism and torture are, they are," Justice Thomas Galligan said in Manhattan's state Supreme Court about Frank Terpil and George Gregory Korkala, who failed to appear for their trial on charges of selling 10,000 machine guns.

Terpil, 41, a former CIA agent, and Korkala, 40, a New Jersey businessman, were convicted May 15 of selling the guns to two undercover detectives posing as Latin American terrorists.

Their trial began last September but Terpil and Korkala jumped \$100,000 bail each and prosecutors said they fled the country.

The defendants also were convicted of selling 10 million rounds of ammunition, a bomb, firearm silencers and four other guns.

The firearms were sold here in November and December 1979 during negotiations in which the defendants were said to have displayed a wide variety of weapons, including poisons intended for assassinations.

Terpil and Korkala were arrested Dec. 22, 1979, in the New York Hilton Hotel after receiving a \$56,000 down payment on a \$2 million contract to purchase the machine guns.

In seeking the maximum sentence, Assistant District Attorney Matthew Crosson said, "It was hard to believe... two men could rise to the level of perversity to make a living out of killing human beings, to make a mechanism of death. They have contributed to instability and to chaos throughout the world."

The prosecutor said Terpil and Korkala "will be apprehended" and will serve their sentences.

Despite the charge of bail-jumping, defense lawyers said their absence was involuntary, but gave no public explanation of the circumstances.

"These defendants are in all respects more violent, their conduct is far more egregious than most any other defendants before this court," the judge said in imposing the maximum sentence.

Under the terms, the defendants are not eligible to apply for parole until they have served 17 and two-thirds years.